

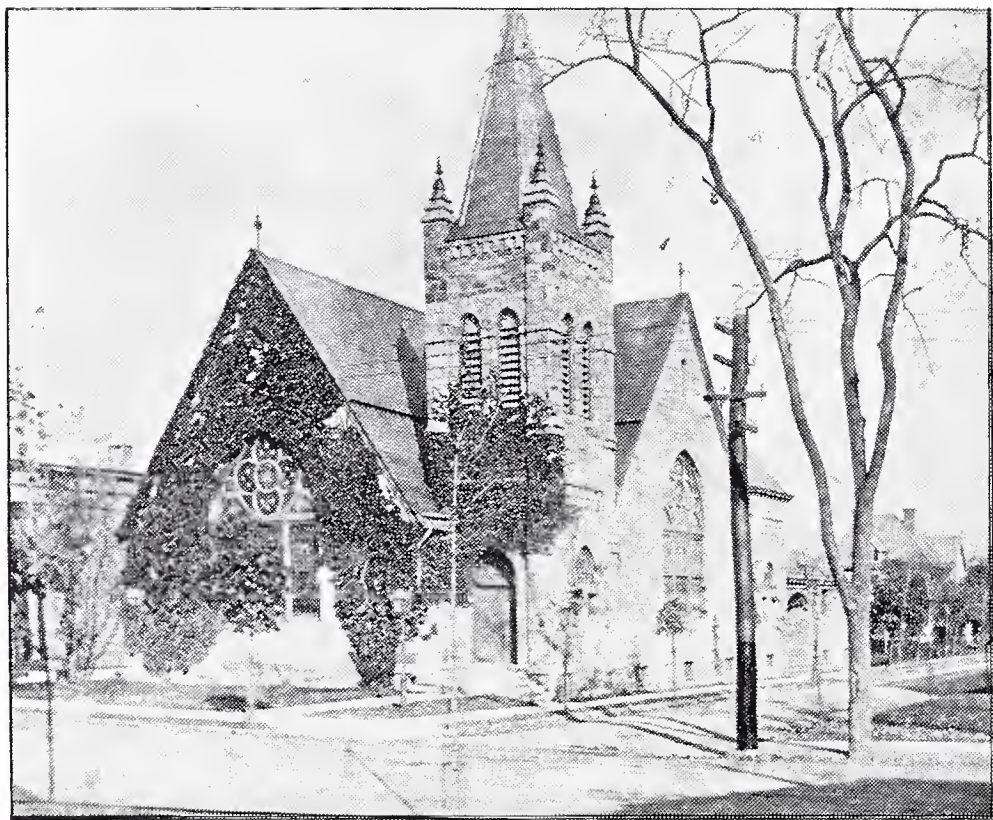
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HISTORY  
OF THE  
Methodist Episcopal Church  
OF  
Flemington, N. J.  
1822-1914





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METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
Flemington, N. J.  
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BY REV. JOHN H. E. SCHULTZ

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FLEMINGTON, N. J.  
HIRAM E. DEATS  
1915

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## History of The Methodist Episcopal Church

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Previous to the formation of a Methodist Class in Flemington, Ralph Stout, a Local Preacher from New Brunswick, seems to have been the only Methodist in the village.

Quite a sensation was produced in the Presbyterian Church one Sunday morning in 1822, when the Rev. Dr. Clark stated that he had been requested by persons calling themselves Methodists to announce that a meeting would be held by them that afternoon in the Court House, adding, "rather ungraciously," that "Those could go who chose." The preachers on this occasion were David and Isaac James, brothers, and Local Preachers from Trenton. "They had been invited to come by Asher Atkinson, a Quaker, distinguished for his love of a good argument on knotty theological questions, and for his strong antipathy against the Calvinistic creed." If the motive of Atkinson was what this statement seems to indicate, we do not wonder at "Dominie" Clark's statement; and, considering the hair-splitting tendencies of the times, he is to be commended for making the announcement at all.

Popular opinion seems to have been divided on the question of allowing the use of the Court House for the use of the Methodists; for, during these years, the little band of Methodists had to contend with strong prejudices on every side. The following extract from the records of the Readington Dutch Reformed Church will convey some idea of the estimate placed upon them by other churches of the town and county. (April 17th, 1785) "Margaret Demott, for an offense to the Church in countenancing the erroneous doctrine of the Methodists, having heretofore been debarred the use of the Lord's Supper, is now, upon confession of sin, readmitted to the benefit of the sacred ordinance." Asher Atkinson, finding that the janitress of the Court House was disposed to keep the building closed, strongly remonstrated with her, saying, "Let me tell you, I'm going to do as I please; when I say a thing, I mean it. They are coming here, and are going to preach." David James was the preacher that day, and to him belonged the honor of preaching the first Methodist sermon ever preached in Flemington. His brother followed with another sermon a week or two afterward.

A Class seems to have been formed about this time, and the meeting place was "in a small house on the north side of Bonnell street, the first house in this neighborhood, known subsequently as "the Miller house," and today as "Fleming Castle." As this house was then surrounded by meadowland, it was called, in those days, "the meadow house." "Polly Timbrouck, of blessed memory, was the good sister who opened her doors for the Class meeting."

In 1823, Flemington was made a regular appointment on the Trenton Circuit of the Philadelphia Conference; and the Rev. Bartholomew Weed and the Rev. James McLauren were the appointed ministers.



In the fall of that year a camp-meeting, called "The Stony Ground Camp-meeting," was held on land owned by Asher Atkinson, located near Mr. Charles Hanson's. At this meeting about forty persons professed conversion. Nearly all of these joined the Methodist Church. Among the number were Polly Timhrouck, Samuel Atkinson, Thomas Carhart, Andrew Hoagland and John Huff.

About this time, John Atkinson, a half-brother to Samuel, a cabinet-maker, came from Philadelphia to live in Flemington. He was an earnest Christian man, and became the first regular Class-leader of the new society; and, by many, has been called "the father" of Flemington Methodism.

In the spring of 1824 John Creamer and Isaac Wirmer were stationed here, and the question of a church building was agitated. A subscription paper was drawn up by William Iliff, secretary of the Official Board, and endorsed by the widely-known and much-esteemed Manning Force, who was then Presiding Elder of the Trenton District. The following words head the subscription book: "This is to certify that John Atkinson is duly authorized by the trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Flemington to make collections for the purpose of building a Meeting House in said place; and, the Society being small and needy, we hope that a generous and favorable public will aid them liberally. (Signed) Manning Force." Also, "Know all men whom this may concern, that Andrew Hoagland, Samuel Atkinson, Asher Hankinson, John Atkinson, and Peter Bodine were elected a board of Trustees, and qualified to be a Body Corporate, agreeable to the Laws of the State of New Jersey; and, have taken for a name: The Trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Society of Flemington." Extract from the minutes of the Board: "Resolved, that David James and John Atkinson be a Committee to collect Donations and Subscriptions for building a Meeting House to and for the use of the Methodist Episcopal Society of Flemington. (Signed) Wm. Iliff, Secretary of the Board."

The lot purchased, now known as the McPherson Building, Nos. 21-27 Main street, and upon which the first Methodist Episcopal Church edifice was erected, was designated as "on the corner adjoining Charles Bonnell's Tavern." It was obtained from Thomas Capner, Esq., for the nominal sum of \$50.

Among the local subscribers, we find the names of John Atkinson, Samuel Atkinson, and Joakim Hill, contributing twenty dollars each; Alexander Wurts, G. Maxwell, Andrew Miller, C. Bartles and Peter J. Clark, each five dollars; Jemima P. Atkinson, Charles Bonnell, Asher Atkinson, George Painter, William Iliff and Elijah Carman, each ten dollars. Subscriptions were obtained from Trenton, Pennington, Bordentown, Allentown, Crosswicks, Lebanon, Haverstraw, Nyack, New York City, New Brunswick, Croton, Brooklyn and other places. Among the New York subscribers are some names well known to Methodism. A. C. Wheeler, superintendent of the first Methodist Sunday school in New York; Eliphalet Wheeler, a wealthy butcher of Washington Market; Eliza Verplanck, Richard Kirby, Arthur Tappan, a well-known merchant of those days, and subsequently nearly mobbed for his well-known anti-slavery principles; J. & C. Gascoigne, Mrs. Charles Harper, Mrs. Arcularius. The total subscription on the book amounted to \$640.18. Doubtless material and labor were also largely contributed.

The building of the church was begun in the fall of 1825, and it was ready for use in the spring of 1826. For a number of years the walls inside were only "scratch coated," and the woodwork, probably "innocent of paint." John Walker and Richard W. Petherbridge were the pastors at this time; the charge being doubtless connected with the Trenton and Asbury Circuits, as we note that a Camp Meeting for the Trenton and Asbury Circuits was held in this neighborhood, probably on the grounds near the residence of John Huff, from June 9 to 14, 1825. In 1849, during the pastorate of Joseph Ashbrook, the front of the church was altered and improved. In 1860, Rev.



Gilbert Vanhorn, pastor, the building was enlarged by building the vestibule in front, and by an addition of 16 feet in the rear. Silvanus W. Decker (now an honored member of the Newark Conference) then teaching in Flemington, was instrumental in raising much of the money for paying the debt thus incurred.

The Court House, in which the first Methodist service was held in 1822, was burned on Wednesday night, Feb. 13, 1828. Doubtless remembering this incident, we read in Snell's History of Hunterdon and Somerset Counties that: "The trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church of Flemington, with commendable promptitude and liberality, tendered the use of their building for the purposes of the county. An act of the Legislature (passed Feb. 15, 1828) made it 'lawful to hold the Circuit Courts, Courts of Oyer and Terminer, and General Jail Delivery, Court of Common Pleas, General Quarter Session of the Peace and Orphans' Courts, to be held for the said County of Hunterdon, in the Methodist Episcopal Church in Flemington, until the inhabitants of said County shall erect a Court House for said County.'" Four regular terms, besides several special terms for a year, were held therein. It is also interesting to note that a public whipping post stood near the church property.

The first Sunday school of Flemington was a union Sunday school, and was organized in 1818. The sessions of the school were held in the Academy Building for three years; then it was removed to the gallery of the Presbyterian Church. The first superintendent was Daniel Griggs, who held the position for three years. Mahlon Smith was then elected, also serving for three years. In the year 1824 the school divided, each congregation forming its own school. The writer does not know who the first superintendent of the Methodist school was, as there appears to be no historic record available at the present time.

In 1828, John Walker and James Moore were the Circuit preachers supplying Flemington; 1827-28, Thomas Davis and William H. Bull were the preachers; in 1829, J. Finley and M. Lacost; in 1830, John Finley and James H. McFarland; in 1831, Richard W. Petherbridge (second term) and John Buckley; in 1832, Solomon Higgins, and Mr. Petherbridge seem to have settled on the Circuit as Supernumerary, that is, temporarily retired; in 1832, Thomas J. Thompson was preacher; in 1833, Chas. Ford.

During these early days, "Sammy" Atkinson, a shoemaker by trade, was the Class Leader of the Charge. His piety and life were such that it was said of him: "If anybody is holy, Sammy Atkinson is." In person, he was erect, and very tall. In those early days the old church was lighted with candles, and one of the old members, William Applegate, who acted as sexton, used to go around snuffing the candles with his fingers.

In the year 1834, Flemington appears on the minutes of the Philadelphia Conference as a separate Charge, or Circuit in the East Jersey District, until, about 1861, it was connected with the Readington, or "Wood's Church."

In 1834, John L. Swain was appointed Preacher in Charge, followed in 1835 by J. L. Lenhart. It is said that Mr. Lenhart possessed considerable popular talent, and, years later, was chaplain in the United States Navy. He met with a tragic fate, going down with the Cumberland in the gallant but unequal conflict with the iron-clad Merrimac. The total number of members reported this year for the Circuit was 127 whites and 5 colored. (In those days the colored members were reported separately.) The amount of benevolent collections was \$4.78. The following spring, when Mr. Lenhart's time expired, there were 170 white members, and 13 colored reported to Conference. J. O. Rogers was Mr. Lenhart's assistant. In the spring of 1836, Jefferson Lewis was appointed to the Flemington Circuit.

In the year 1837 the old Philadelphia Conference was divided, and Flemington appears in the minutes of the New Jersey Conference, and was a part of the Newark District. The Circuit seems also to have been divided,

for only 98 white and 3 colored members were reported; but the benevolent collections had advanced to \$19.29.

Manning Force was Presiding Elder; and James Hevener and J. M. Tuttle were the preachers for this and the following year. While Mr. Tuttle was here, there was a controversy between the Baptists and the Methodists. This seems to have been a doctrinal controversy, for Mr. Tuttle invited Rev. Anthony Atwood to come and preach on the points in dispute, Mr. Atwood having recently published a book, or tract, on "Baptism," and Mr. Tuttle supposing him to be just the man for the occasion. Three sermons were preached by Mr. Atwood. History does not tell us anything further concerning the dispute. Doubtless, as in all fruitless discussions, it was "a seven day's wonder," and the settlement seems to have been satisfactory to all concerned, both parties adhering to their original beliefs.

In 1839, William Hanley and James White were stationed here; in 1840, Abraham K. Street and George Hitchings; in 1841, A. K. Street and Washington Thomas; in 1842, James W. McDougall and T. T. Campfield. A letter from Mr. Campfield to Rev. Richard Johns, about 1881, gives a full and interesting account of Flemington Circuit, at that early date, and especially of the great revivals with which it was favored, and the work of a Methodist preacher in those days. "Our Sabbath preaching places were Flemington, Readington, Sergeantsville, Lambertville and "The Rocks," in Amwell Township. We held an extra meeting in the woods at Amwell, commencing on the 15th of September, and continuing until November. Part of the time in the woods, and at night in a large barn. When it stormed, we held it in the schoolhouse. Over 70 conversions; 60 of this number joined our church. Then we held extra meetings at Readington which lasted 12 weeks. 120 were converted, and 102 joined our church. We then commenced extra meetings at Flemington about Christmas of that year, and about 30 were converted. In January, 1843, we held a meeting at Lambertville; 25 were converted and joined our church. In February we held a meeting at Sergeantsville, with 60 conversions, Rev. Enoch Green of the New Jersey Conference being one of them. This meeting was continued until the last of March. Then we went to Conference, held at New Brunswick, N. J. Mr. McDougall lived in Flemington, in a rented house, near the Presbyterian Church. I had my home among the people, a few days in a place. Rev. McDougall received \$300 salary, and a house; my allowance was \$100. Over 300 were converted during that year."

These were days of great revivals. Previous to this, during the pastorate of Lenhart and Rodgers (1835-6), great results along evangelistic lines were accomplished. We have spoken of Lenhart's ability; he was also a man of warm heart, and fervent piety. Great crowds were attracted by his preaching; and many also came to hear "Jimmie" Rodgers, a singer of unusual ability. It is said of these men, "They were makers of history." In 1838-1840, under Tuttle and Hevener, "with their ceaseless activity and warm evangelistic spirit, they were instrumental in leading multitudes to the cross. Tuttle's voice was very loud and strong, and his spirit was very fervid. He was strong and blunt in speech, at which many were offended. Another great revival took place in 1867-69, during the pastorate of Rev. David Walters. The Presbyterian pastor exclaimed, "The Methodists are taking the country." His own daughter was converted at the Methodist altar at these meetings. Other converts who might be named were Miller Kline, David Van Fleet and H. E. Pedrick." (Rev. F. A. Mason, from Church Record.)

After this digression, we return to the successive pastorates. In 1843, Edward Page and Josiah F. Canfield were the preachers. At this time, Flemington Circuit reports 391 white and 14 colored members. In 1844, Flemington and Readington was the name given to the Charge, and Edward Saunders (or Sanders) was the preacher; in 1845-46, Caleb A. Lippencott

was appointed. He was a remarkable man, eccentric, possessing natural talents of a very high order, and highly successful everywhere. The first Methodist parsonage of the Charge was then built, on the corner of what is now Park avenue and Capner street. Its first occupant was Rev. Wesley Robertson, 1847-48. The house was in an unfinished state when Mr. Robertson arrived, and the people thought themselves unable to add the improvements necessary to make it habitable; but by his persuasions a successful effort was made.

In 1849-50, Joseph Ashbrook was pastor. During his first year an unfortunate disagreement between him and some of the prominent members arose, making a great deal of trouble, and hindering the prosperity of the church. So strong was the feeling that a protest was sent to the Conference against his re-appointment; nevertheless Mr. Ashbrook was re-appointed, and several persons left the church never to return. In 1851-52, J. W. McDougall was appointed for the second time. During 1853-54, J. P. Daily was pastor, and during 1855 and 56, Fletcher Lummis. 1857, Sylvester Armstrong, a man of marked ability, peculiar in some respects, strong of will, honest, sincere, devoted, a strong anti-slavery man.

From 1858 to 59, Thomas Walters was pastor. He was a genial Englishman, a good singer, a master in the art. He was very popular with all classes. The Presbyterians were particularly friendly toward him, and, when his two little children, twins, died, they gave him the burial spot in their cemetery where the little ones were tenderly laid away.

Gilbert Vanhorne was the preacher for 1861 and 62. During his term the church building was greatly improved, and enlarged, at an expense of over \$4,000. The proposed constitutional amendment, changing the term of ministerial service from two to three years, was brought before the Quarterly Conference, and the vote was declared in favor of the old term of two years. In 1862 and 63, Sylvester H. Opdyke served. From 1864 to 1866, J. P. Daily, for a second term, was pastor. From an item in the pastor's report, it would seem that either the Methodists did not organize a Sunday school of their own in 1824 when the union Sunday school was divided, or, that the school had failed, for Mr. Daily says concerning the Sunday school, under date of April 30, 1864:

"There is nothing in connection with the church that is a more cheerful sign of advancement than the present state of the Sunday school. Eleven years ago (the time of Mr. Daily's first pastorate) we found no school; but there is now a good one at this place, kept open all the year, and the average attendance is fifty scholars." After the statement made above, taken from Snell's History (page 311) from the historical Account of the Presbyterian Church by Rev. Geo. S. Mott, D. D., in which he states that "In the year 1824 the (union) school divided, each congregation forming its own congregation," the writer made inquiry concerning a Methodist Sunday school, earlier than the above date. Mr. Asher Stout came to Flemington, a lad of 16, in the year 1848. He said that at that time there was a flourishing Sunday school, held in the gallery of the "old church," and that "Brother Applegate" was superintendent. The interest in Sunday school work was not as great in those days; and, it would seem that there were times when the work was allowed to cease altogether, to be revived again at a later date. Miss Lucy Miller, of "Fleming Castle,"—born 1830—remembers back to 1840; and says that she remembers, and believes that at this time (1840) there was a Sunday school in connection with the Methodist Church, and that it was held in the basement of the church, as were the Class Meetings, etc. Miss Miller has been a member of this church since she was a girl.

David Walters was pastor, 1867-69. Flemington became a Station the year of Mr. Walter's appointment. The Statistical Report of 1867 gives two churches, with a probable value of \$9,000, and one parsonage, worth \$2,500.



There were two Sunday schools, with 20 officers and teachers, and 178 scholars. Mr. Daily received \$800 salary and \$227 additional, making a total of \$1,027, showing that the Charge was in a prosperous condition. Number of members reported, 290 in full connection, and 40 probationers. Until 1867 Flemington was connected with Readington church. At this Conference, Readington was connected with Allerton, and J. W. Daily was appointed pastor to the new Charge. The Statistics of the next year show a membership in full connection of 142, and 136 probationers, one church building, valued at \$6,000, and the parsonage, valued at \$3,000. The Sunday school had 14 officers and teachers, and 100 scholars. In his annual report to the Conference that year, the Rev. S. W. Hilliard, Presiding Elder of the Elizabeth District, says: "The most extensive revivals have been at Flemington, where one hundred and forty-five have been converted, and at Bethel, Somerville, Plainfield and St. Paul's, Elizabeth." This large revival accounts for the large number of probationers. Mr. Walters received \$850 salary, and "additional," \$230, making a total, for its first year as a separate Charge, of \$1,080. It is also of interest to note that the new Charge, Readington and Allerton, paid, this same year, a total of \$662, a total of \$1,742 from a people, who, the year before, had paid \$1,027. The large increase at Flemington was doubtless due to the revival, and increased membership therefrom. It is always true, that seasons of revival are seasons of easy church finance.

In 1870-71, Albert H. Brown was pastor; 1872-74, Gilbert H. Winans; 1875, Samuel J. Morris; 1876-78, Thomas E. Gordon. During Mr. Gordon's pastorate the membership rose to the highest point in the decade. He reported to the Conference, 1878, 217 members in full connection, and 13 probationers. The Sunday school had 23 officers and teachers, and 130 scholars. The salary was \$1,000. Richard Johns was the next pastor, and served during the Conference years, 1879-82. Mr. Johns was author of the history of the church which appears in James P. Snell's History of Hunterdon and Somerset Counties, pages 319-321.

Samuel B. Rooney was pastor 1882-1885. In the Presiding Elder's report to the Conference, 1883, Rev. Lewis R. Dunn speaks of several Charges "where a wonderful work of God has been enjoyed; on each of which more than one hundred souls were won." Flemington was one of them. The report of that spring shows that 35 probationers had been received in full connection, and that there were 35 yet on probation, the total membership in full connection being 250. During the same year, according to the Elder's report, "Flemington at last has purchased a handsome lot in the heart of the town at a cost of \$6,000 upon which, we trust, a suitable and commodious church will soon be erected." In Rev. F. A. Mason's report of the purchase he says: "Through the determination of Rev. S. B. Rooney, the late Mr. Charles Bartles taking a lively interest in the matter, and manifesting that interest by a substantial subscription toward the purchase price, the present lot (corner of Main street and Maple avenue) was purchased for the sum of \$5,000. (This latter price is correct.) One-half the purchase price was paid, June 12, 1883, the other half remaining on bond and mortgage. The lot was purchased from its former owner, Vice Chancellor John T. Bird, the old frame house in which he had lived being upon it. In Presiding Elder S. Van Benschoten's report, 1885, we find the following concerning Flemington: "Flemington has put on record a resolution, unanimously adopted, to build a new church within the year. There are already substantial signs of success." In 1886, the same Presiding Elder says: "Flemington has disposed of her church edifice, and has \$11,500 in cash and good subscriptions for the erection of another. The building is expected to cost \$15,000, and will be probably completed by the next Conference. The following year, Dr. Van Benschoten reports as follows: "The expressed probability that our church at Flemington would be completed within the present Conference year has not been fully realized. All things considered, it is unques-

tionably best that it has not been. The work has advanced under judicious management as rapidly as circumstances would allow. It was a stupendous undertaking for that people with their limited financial resources to erect an edifice of grey stone, of unusual architectural beauty and solidity, fifty-four feet wide, and one hundred and twenty feet in extreme length, in the center of the town, costing in the neighborhood of \$20,000. They are to be commended rather than condemned for having gone slow and sure. They confidently expect to be in the lecture room with all bills settled, in less than two months. After that, it is the deliberate purpose of the Board to proceed at once to raise funds, which will be a comparatively small amount, and complete the auditorium. Then they will have accomplished a work which will be an honor to themselves, to the District, and to the Conference." **Expectation and realization** are pretty well illustrated in the above extracts from the Presiding Elder's reports. Before proceeding further with the account of the building of the present beautiful edifice, of which we have a full account, thanks to the Rev. F. A. Mason, it will be of interest to consider the history of the parsonage homes of the various pastors.

As we have noted, the first parsonage belonging to the Flemington congregation, was finished in the year 1847, and was occupied for the first time by the Rev. Wesley Robertson and family. This building was the home of the preachers until the year 1882, when it was sold to Mr. John Painter. When Rev. R. Johns moved out of it, Mr. Asher B. Stout and family moved into it. In 1881, one parsonage valued at \$2,500 was reported as belonging to the congregation. During the years 1882-83 there was no parsonage reported, the pastor, Rev. Mr. Rooney, living in a house rented for him on Mine street. Again, for three consecutive years, 1884 to 86, a parsonage is reported, and valued at \$5,000. This was the former home of the late Vice Chancellor Bird, and was a part of the property purchased, as noted previously, for a "church lot." The Rev. Francis A. Mason was pastor 1885-87, residing in the Bird house, during the first two years of his pastorate. During the last year, Mr. Mason lived in the Jerusha Fulper property, now No. 7 Pennsylvania avenue. Rev. C. S. Ryman also lived in this house during the first year of his pastorate. The Bird house was sold to Mr. Hiram Deats and in 1886 was moved to a lot on Broad street (now No. 61, and occupied by Mr. George C. Pedrick and family). As we shall note later, the present parsonage, on the corner of Spring street and Maple avenue, was erected in 1889, and was first occupied by the Rev. C. S. Ryman and family. It is of interest to know that all of these successive homes of the pastors are still standing, and occupied as dwellings.

In what now follows, I quote largely from a copy of a paper written by the Rev. Francis A. Mason, and read at the dedication of the present church edifice, Feb. 22, 1888: "The Flemington Methodist Episcopal Church was organized in the year 1823. The church edifice lately vacated was built in 1825. After about 25 years of service, to meet the needs of a growing congregation, it was considerably enlarged. For some years last past, however, the building has been found uncomfortable, and illy adapted to the needs of the church and Sunday school. The subject of a new church was mooted, but took no definite shape until the year 1883. After a Sunday morning service, April 19, 1885, a public subscription towards a new church being taken, about \$2,500 was secured. When it was found in the late fall of the same year that Mr. James Hoagland, who had been for forty years a most worthy member, and substantial supporter of the church, had, at his recent decease, left a legacy of \$3,000 to the church, it was at once determined to take active measures toward building.

As the first necessary step, the sale of the old building was resolved upon. Accordingly the property was disposed of at auction in December, 1885. The day was fine, the attendance good. Mr. Jacob W. Spangenberg bought the property for \$3,375.

"The last service in the old church was held on the evening of January 10, 1886. The last sermon was preached in the morning, by the pastor, from I Cor. 16: 2, 'Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there may be no gatherings when I come.' Through the courtesy of the Board of Freeholders, the congregation worshipped from this time until June, 1887, in the Court House; regular preaching services, and the Sabbath school being held on the Sabbath day, and prayer meeting on Friday evenings.

"At a meeting of the joint Official Board, held early in June, 1886, a Building Committee consisting of William Applegate, Jesse P. Bodine, Dennis S. Hall, Samuel Cooley and George C. Pedrick, was appointed. The committee subsequently organized by electing William Applegate, chairman; J. P. Bodine, treasurer, and George C. Pedrick, secretary. The committee at once entered actively upon the work of securing a suitable building plan. Without entering into detail of their labors, suffice it to say, that after several months of diligent application, they submitted for the approval of the Joint Board, at a meeting held in the spring of 1886, the plans of the present edifice prepared by Hazlehurst & Huckel, architects, of Philadelphia. The Board gave their approval, and bids for the erection of the edifice were advertised for. The contract for the stone work was finally awarded to Messrs. Richardson & Farrier, of New Market, N. J., and that for the carpenter work to Messrs. Swallow & Buchanan, of Flemington, N. J. The work of these superior mechanics speaks for itself in this substantial building, and that, whether as to the character of the materials used, or the excellence of the mechanical part of their labors."

Today, January, 1914, as we note the splendid structure, more beautiful as mellowed and consecrated by nearly 26 years of service, we admire, and wonder at the wisdom of all concerned in the erection of this splendid, modern, up-to-date church edifice. The structure must have been in advance of the age in which it was built, for it is as modern and up-to-date now as though it had just come from the skilled builder's hands. And, with the repairs of the present year, just finished, and costing about \$500, is as perfect as on the day of its completion.

"Ground for the new edifice was broken in July, 1886, and the first stone laid on the 26th day of that month. The cornerstone, the gift of Mr. James Murphy, was laid September 4th, 1886. The day was unusually fine, the attendance large, and the services interesting. Brief addresses were made by Rev. Dr. Geo. S. Mott, the Rev. F. S. Chapell, the Rev. S. B. Rooney, and Mr. Richardson, one of the contractors. The congregation united with the pastor in appropriate responses; and the choir, from an improvised platform, led the singing of the hymns. The stone was laid by the Rev. S. B. Rooney. A basket collection of \$50 attested the interest of those present.

"The chapel was finished and ready for occupancy in June, 1887. The opening service was held on Sunday, the 26th of that month, the Rev. Dr. J. M. Reed, Corresponding Secretary of the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, preaching in the morning, from John 14: 2, 3, and the Rev. S. Van Benschoten, D. D., Presiding Elder, preaching in the evening from Heb. 10: 25. In the afternoon a large and interesting platform meeting was held, addresses being made by Dr. Mott, the Rev. Dr. T. E. Vassar, of Newark, and the Rev. C. E. Walton, of Quakertown. The choir led in spirited singing, and the proceedings were full of interest. A subscription toward the new church, realized during the day, about \$2,200. Many tears of gratitude and joy were shed, because, under God's blessing, the enterprise had prospered thus far, so well. Great credit is due the Building Committee for the efficiency and good judgment with which they have done their work. Beyond all question, much expense has been saved to the church by their prudent, careful, and self-sacrificing management. But with them, it has been a labor of love.



"The Ladies' Building League, Mrs. John A. Bullock, president, has proved itself an important factor in the financial part of the undertaking, and the tribute of great praise belongs to these ladies for their industry and enterprise. Through cantatas, choral union concerts, praise services, etc., a considerable sum has been realized for the building fund, as will be shown in the Treasurer's report." (From that report it appears that the building and furnishing had cost about \$20,800, and that a balance of about \$4,000 was needed to meet all obligations.)

"The Communion Table was the Christmas gift of the Sunday school. Of the total cost of the windows, a little more than half was paid by, and through friends. Dr. William H. Bartles, jointly with his sister, Mrs. McCandless, placed in the front, the large and beautiful window in memory of their father, the late Charles Bartles. Mrs. R. F. Y. Pierce provided the rose window over the pulpit; and the Misses Ellis, that between the audience room and the chapel. Messrs. Nevius Brothers, Mr. H. G. Voorhees, and Misses Rand and Fisher provided the windows in the vestibules. The windows to the right and left of the pulpit are the gift of Mr. James E. Brodhead. That next to the choir, and with the suggestion, and the hearty concurrence of the Official Board, being a memorial window to the pastor's son, Frank. The north window, next to the street, is the gift of Mr. Alex. B. Allen. The large window in the south has been placed by the church "In memoriam" of James Hoagland, deceased, whose good name, and memory of a consecrated Christian life, are a precious legacy to the church. The windows of the audience room are the work of Mr. Alfred Godwin, of Philadelphia. The decorating was done by Joseph Chapman & Co., of the same city. The reflectors were made by Frink, of New York."

"The pastor and his people have been cheered on in their work by a public opinion, that from the first to the last, has set as a signet of approval on their undertaking, and that has found frequent and individual expression, not alone in words, but by generous patronage of the enterprises of the church; and by substantial subscriptions of money. 'But except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it.' And, above all, the whole church acknowledges with profound and heartfelt gratitude, its indebtedness to Almighty God, to Whom appeals for direction and help have again and again, and yet again been made, and Whose signal blessing upon the enterprise has been an answer to these appeals. In mercy, no life has been lost, or serious accident occurred during the erection of the building. Looking around, we can but say, in the language of Methodism's founder, sculptured upon the entablature of the old church: 'What hath God wrought!' To Him be all the praise."

"The following account of the dedication exercises, which were held on February 22d, 1888, is partly taken from a local paper, the Hunterdon County Democrat: 'The day was a glorious one for the work. The sun shone warm and effulgent, throwing its radiance over the handsome spire; and made glad the hearts of all the people. There were three services, the first being commenced at 10.30 A. M. The attendance was very large, many having come by train from surrounding towns. More than twenty clergymen were present during the day. The music was excellent, and the choir had the assistance of Mr. W. W. Haworth, of Newark, and of Miss Anita Mason, of New York, who sang, 'I know that my Redeemer liveth,' and 'Come unto Me, all ye that labor.' Both selections were finely rendered. At 10.30 A. M. the Rev. D. W. Couch preached effectively from Zech. 4: 6. At 2.30 P. M. the Rev. Merritt Hulburd, D. D., preached from John 7: 17. At 7.30 P. M. the Rev. F. C. Iglehart discoursed from John 15:5. The sermons were worthy of the men who preached them, and were listened to with marked attention by the great congregations, many of whom had to stand during their delivery. The church was dedicated at the afternoon service by the Presiding Elder of the Elizabeth District, Rev. S. Van Benschoten, D. D. The finances



were skillfully managed by the Rev. D. W. Couch, assisted by the Presiding Elder. The amount secured was \$3,320. The basket collections amounted to \$156. The result was highly gratifying to the church and congregation, and joy and gratitude filled the hearts of those who had labored long and hard to attain these results. Rev. S. B. Rooney, T. E. Gordon, D. Walters were present, the former two of whom assisted in the services, as did the Rev. G. S. Mott, D. D., the local Presbyterian pastor, and the Rev. F. L. Chapell, the local Baptist pastor. Besides the visitors, the choir consisted, of sopranos, Mrs. D. S. Hall, Mrs. P. T. B. Nevius, Miss Emma Van Fleet, Miss Luella Krymer; altos, Miss Mary H. Parse, Miss Lucy Miller, Miss Sallie C. Krymer, Miss Addie T. Price; tenor, Mr. Samuel Ewing; basses, Mr. W. G. B. Price, Mr. D. S. Hall, Mr. John B. Case, Mr. Lynden W. Krymer. Organist, Mrs. W. H. Bodine; cornetist, Mr. W. H. Bodine; trombone, Mr. J. D. Parse; clarinet, Mr. William Fisher; flute, Mr. Harry Vosseller, and there were several other instruments by members of the local orchestra."

"The building, most substantially built of grey sandstone, is 54 by 120 feet in extreme dimensions; the audience room being 50x72 feet, and the chapel, connected with the former by sliding doors, being 40x50 feet. The chapel with high ceiling, clear story windows and tastefully decorated walls, is a very attractive room. With sloping floors, radiating aisles, and no pillars, every seat in the audience room is available. Very large windows to the west and south, a rose window over the pulpit, with three smaller windows to the north, afford abundance of light. The windows are cathedral glass throughout the building; those in the church proper are greatly admired. The walls are tastefully decorated, and harmonize with the pews, and with the woodwork, which are of a rich oak color. Two large Frink reflectors beautifully light up the church at night."

In every detail the dedication day was successful, in preaching, music, attendance, spirit and finances, and, who but God gives success? (See Christian Advocate, March 1, 1888.)

The following financial statement was read on the morning of dedication day:

Cost of church building.....	\$20,865.00
Subscriptions, \$7,616; sale of old building, \$3,375;	
legacy of Jas. Hoagland, \$3,000; ladies' build-	
ing league, \$1,457; concerts, etc., \$966; from	
mortgage, \$500 .....	16,914.00
Deficit .....	\$3,951.00

The three years' pastorate of the Rev. Francis A. Mason, under whose wise and earnest efforts the new church edifice was erected, terminated April 1st, 1888. His successor was the Rev. Charles S. Ryman, whose pastoral term was three years. In the winter of 1888-89 the church was favored with a revival, and eighty-one persons were added to the church on probation, of which number, 66 were received in full connection. During the same year, a beautiful and commodious parsonage was built on the lot in the rear of the church, fronting on Spring street. The parsonage cost, exclusive of the ground, a trifle more than \$3,000. It contains a parlor, sitting-room, dining-room, kitchen and pantry on the first floor; five bedrooms and a bathroom on the second floor, and a finished room in the attic.

In the report given at the Conference, April, 1891, the following items appear pertaining to the Flemington church. A church costing \$30,000, on which there is an indebtedness of \$6,000. Membership, 255. Probationers, 5. Pastor's salary, in addition to the rental value of the parsonage, \$1,300. Presiding Elder, \$64. Bishops, \$21. Conference claimants, \$52. Missions, \$158. Church Extension, \$20. Freedman's Aid Society, \$18. Education, \$12. American Bible Society, \$10. Sunday School Union, \$5. Tract Society, \$5.

Woman's Foreign Missionary Society, \$3. Woman's Home Missionary Society, \$2.

Last year, 1913, was the twenty-fifth anniversary of the dedication of the church. I copy from the statistical report to the Conference to show the relative condition of the Charge after a quarter of a century: Pastor's salary, exclusive of house rental value, \$1,200. Presiding Elder, \$76. Bishops, \$19. Conference Claimants, \$75. Missions, Home and Foreign, \$295. Freedman's Aid, \$30. Education, \$15. Sunday schools, \$14. Special Conference Claimants, \$40. Church Temperance Society, \$7. Woman's Foreign Missionary Society, \$77. Woman's Home Mission Society, \$43. American Bible Society, \$10. Central Office of Epworth League, \$5. Other benevolences, \$10. This with a membership of 249 full members, and 8 probationers. While the salary is \$100 less than it was twenty-two years ago, when Dr. Ryman made his report, the total of church benevolences was \$391 more. The salary was advanced to \$1,300 during Dr. Ryman's pastorate, and the first year of that of the Rev. G. C. Mouldsdales, dropping to \$1,000 in 1893, advancing to \$1,200 in 1897, during the first year's pastorate of Rev. Wesley Martin. It has remained \$1,200 up to the present time.

"The successor of the Rev. C. S. Ryman was Gilbert C. Mouldsdales, whose pastorate extended through a period of five years. During this time, 52 persons were admitted on probation, and 32 received into full connection. During this period the bell was placed in the tower, largely through the effort of Dr. Isaac S. Cramer. The carpet was put on the floor of the lecture room; a new heater was put in the basement. The parsonage was painted, papered and various other improvements were made. The Epworth League was actively engaged, during the greater part of this period, in gathering money for an organ fund, and in raising money for the indebtedness on the church property. Five hundred dollars were raised for the purpose of paying off some of the debt on the church property; but it was raised with the understanding that the Official Board was to raise the same amount; in case it was not done, the same amount was to be placed in the organ fund. The Official Board failed to raise the amount apportioned them, and so the money raised by the League was turned into the organ fund referred to. The Epworth League, during the five years of Dr. Mouldsdales' pastorate, raised \$1,172.11 for the organ fund, exclusive of a considerable sum necessary for running expenses and improvements. The church debt, during the first year was reduced \$400 by a person who gave a note held against the church for the same amount. In addition, money was raised to pay off a floating obligation incurred by borrowing, on the part of the Official Board, to meet their expenses. Notwithstanding the hard times, the five years' pastorate closed with every obligation met."

"The successful five years' pastorate of the Rev. G. C. Mouldsdales closed with the month of March, 1896. His successor, the Rev. Wesley Martin, began his work on the first Sunday in April of the same year. He found a church membership numbering 243, and a debt on the church property of \$6,140. In the autumn of 1896, subscriptions were secured covering the amount of this indebtedness. Each subscriber was then asked to divide his subscription into three equal parts and give three personal notes to the Trustees of the Church, each note respectively representing one-third of the amount of his pledge. Most of the subscribers did this. The first issue of said notes, amounting to one-third of the indebtedness, were written without interest, and made to fall due on the first day of April, 1897. The second, with interest, April 1st, 1898, and the third with interest, April 1st, 1899. In November and December of 1896, the church held special revival meetings, which resulted in a spiritual quickening of the membership, and the enrollment of 25 probationers.

On the first day of April, 1897, \$2,140 was paid on the church debt. The Conference of 1897 reappointed Mr. Martin to the church for another year.

During the month of May, in this year, the fence in front of the parsonage was removed, the yard graded, and the sidewalk moved out seven feet to the street line. This much improved the appearance of the parsonage property. As a result of the revival meetings held this year, sixteen persons were received on probation. On April 1st, 1898, \$2,000 was paid on the church debt. The Conference of 1889 made no change in the pastorate. During this year the church and parsonage received a coat of paint, and connections were made with the parsonage for town water. The expenses thus incurred, amounting to about \$150, were promptly met.

Following the week of prayer, in January, 1899, as a result of the special meetings held in the church, the membership was greatly quickened, and 21 probationers added. On April 1st, 1899, the last \$2,000 of church debt was paid. The Conference of 1899 reappointed Mr. Martin for the fourth year. In the early part of this Conference year, the church and parsonage properties were much improved, by connecting the parsonage with the public sewer, laying a new flag sidewalk between Main and Spring streets, and in front of the parsonage, and by putting down a stone curbing on Maple avenue. The cost of all this was fully met as soon as the work was completed. The amount was \$378.82.

As might reasonably be expected, in a subscription made up by so large a number of persons, amounting to so many dollars, and extending over a space of nearly three years, there was a shrinkage of about \$200 in the payment of pledges to the church debt fund. But this deficiency was much more than provided for by the very generous gift of \$1,000 by Miss Sarah Pettit, a friend, though not a member of the church. This liberal donation, which was supplementary to the subscriptions covering the church indebtedness, also made the above-mentioned improvements possible.

In June of the year 1899, the church held what was properly called a "Mortgage-burning Jubilee," at which a three days' programme was successfully carried out. On Sunday, June 25, Robert R. Doherty, a layman, and one of the founders of the Epworth League, preached the morning sermon. In the evening, the Rev. Geo. W. Smith, Presiding Elder, preached. Monday evening, the 26th of June, was Epworth League night and the address was by Rev. Francis A. Mason. The other speakers were the pastor, Rev. Wesley Martin, and Mr. Charles L. H. Apgar, president of the Epworth League.

On Tuesday evening, June 27th, the Rev. T. I. Coultas, D. D., of Morristown, lectured on, "Among the Alps and in Sunny Italy." That these exercises were exceedingly profitable, and a great success, is indicated by the full account of them given in the church record by Mr. Martin himself. It is refreshing to note the activity of the Epworth League during this time, and the successful outcome of the young people's effort at raising money for the organ fund. A copy of President Apgar's report, read on the 26th of June, at the Jubilee Service, indicates abundant life.

The mortgage was burned on the evening of June 25th. Mr. Martin's account is as follows: "A large tray, having been provided, was placed in a conspicuous place on the pulpit platform. The pastor then made a few appropriate remarks to the congregation, and placed the papers in cone shape on the tray. Then the official men of the Charge came forward, and Brother William Applegate, the oldest member of the Official Board, a real old man, with long white hair and trembling hand, lighted a match, and touched it to the pile of age-discolored papers, which soon went up in flame and smoke, while the large congregation, rising to their feet, stood and sang lustily, "Praise God from Whom all blessings flow, etc."

During the winter of this year, the small bathroom in the parsonage was enlarged, and fully equipped, furnished with hot and cold water, and heated by a hot-water radiator attached to the kitchen boiler. The expense, which amounted to \$162.60, was fully met.



The Conference year closed April 3d, 1900. The membership of the church had increased to 293; and, for the first time in the history of the church, it was out of debt. At this Conference after four years of most effective service, Mr. Martin was appointed to the pastorate of the Eighth Avenue Church of Newark, N. J., and the Rev. William C. O'Donnell was appointed to Flemington. Mr. O'Donnell served for two years. During his first year's pastorate, new carpets were placed in the dining and sitting rooms of the parsonage, electric lights installed, and a hot-air furnace placed in the cellar of the parsonage. Mr. O'Donnell says: "The Conference year, 1901-1902, was signalized by the establishment of a handsome pipe organ in the church, adding much to the beauty of the auditorium, and to the attractiveness and effectiveness of the services. An active and thorough, though quiet campaign for funds, conducted by a committee of three from the Board of Trustees, and the pastor, with the funds formerly collected by the Epworth League for this purpose, made a sufficient amount." From the Democrat-Advertiser, Oct. 3, 1901, we learn that the organ cost \$2,000. We also find this statement: "The Epworth League presents the organ to the church, and its labors for the past ten years are deserving of highest commendation. It is a proud moment in its career and the public should show its appreciation of such meritorious conduct by liberal patronage of the concert arranged for next Thursday evening." Also during the year 1901, Mr. Wm. S. Umpleby, as a memorial to his mother, painted the fine decorations back of the pulpit. In October of this year, the Elizabeth District Epworth League held its convention here, being entertained by the local Chapter.

The Rev. Perry C. Bascom was pastor 1902 to 1906, a period of four years. He found a membership of 257 in full connection, and 8 probationers. At the end of his four years' pastorate, there were 267 members in full connection, and 29 probationers. Brother Bascom left no record of his work in the Historical Record of the Church Record Book. From the Conference minutes we glean the following, from the Presiding Elder's report: In 1904, "Flemington has gathered in 20 souls this winter to its Lord." 1905, "Flemington is one of the most acceptable appointments on the District, substantial residences, a cultured community, a generous people, and a genuine loyalty to principle always present. The pastor has had a very successful year. A mission-study class established, 40 persons converted, finances easier than for many years. A splendid plant and kept in good order." 1906, "Flemington has had a thoroughly good year. Blessed revival visited the church, 30 souls converted." At the Conference of this year, the Rev. Mr. Bascom was appointed to the pastorate of the Bound Brook church, and the Rev. C. S. Woodruff was appointed to Flemington.

Dr. Woodruff's pastorate was the longest in the history of the church, lasting from April, 1906, to April, 1912, a period of six years. From the Historical Record we take the following: "The friends gave him and his wife a most hearty welcome. The parsonage had been put in most excellent condition, and furniture and carpets renewed. The most of the rooms were papered, and the house was all that could be desired. In the summer the parsonage was painted two coats, and some flag walk laid." This is the extent of the record in Dr. Woodruff's own handwriting. In the spring of 1912, Dr. Woodruff was appointed to the pastorate of the Allendale Charge, Jersey City District. There is no mention of the Charge in Dr. Halleron's report of 1907, but in that of 1908 he says: "Flemington has had a blessed year. ten saved. All benevolences increased, church improvements, including new carpets and steam heat for the church, and painting parsonage, all costing \$2,600, and all paid without asking a dollar in the public congregation." The following year, Rev. B. D. F. Randolph, D. D., District Superintendent, reports: "At Flemington a large Bible class, flourishing Junior League, and a handsome advance in missions mark the year." In 1910, 18 conversions

are reported. In the report for 1911 we read: "Flemington has invited the pastor to return for the sixth year; three hundred dollars has been expended on improvements." Dr. Woodruff reported 240 members in full connection, and 4 probationers, at the close of his six years' pastorate.

At the Conference of 1912, the Rev. John H. E. Schultz was appointed pastor of the church. The first sermon of the year was preached on the morning of April 7th to an excellent congregation. The pastor and his wife moved into the parsonage which had been thoroughly renovated, partially repapered, and refurnished, on Tuesday, April 9th. A few evenings later they were accorded a delightful reception in the lecture room of the church, at which it was estimated that there were more than 200 persons present, representing all of the denominations of Flemington. Rev. Howard H. Brown welcomed the pastor for the Baptist Church, and the Rev. A. W. Sonne for the Presbyterian Church. During the spring of this year the parsonage was freshened by a coat of paint, and a steam-heating plant was installed to replace the worn out and inadequate hot-air furnace. Mr. Schultz was reappointed to the Church by Bishop Wilson in the spring of 1913.

One event of importance occurring in October, 1912, was a visit from the Elizabeth District Epworth League. The attendance was large, and the visitors expressed themselves as delighted with their cordial reception, and the splendid entertainment given by the Ryman Chapter, No. 2473 E. L. of the local church.

The writer cannot report anything out of the ordinary for the Charge during the two years' pastorate just closing. Evangelistic meetings were held, following the union week of prayer services, which deserve special mention because of the unusual interest, and large attendance, which averaged over 200 for each service, the meetings being held two evenings in each church, commencing with the Baptist Church on Sunday evening, January 4th; the M. E. Tuesday evening, January 6th, and the Presbyterian Church, January 8th. In the two weeks of extra meetings held in our own church, the attendance was fair, and four men were converted.

The writer will here close his portion of the History of the Flemington Methodist Episcopal Church. The pastorate has been delightful, and both he and his wife feel that they have been privileged to have sojourned for two happy years among the good people of Flemington, and in the delightful parsonage-home. The present membership of the church is 262 in full connection, and 2 on probation.